

Introduction and Background

The Design Guidelines for outdoor interpretive exhibits along the trail in Washington were developed in 1999 and contain recommendations related to graphics, imagery, color, and format for interpretive panels, markers, signs, kiosks, and other features to be installed across the state in preparation for the bicentennial.

The intent of the guidelines is to offer guidance for the design and development of interpretive elements and signs so that a unified “look” can be implemented statewide, as well as to ensure that a consistent level of lasting quality and integrity is inherent in these elements. Collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies on interpretive projects, as suggested in the guidelines will further ensure that interpretive topics and themes create an interesting, unique story across Washington, avoiding repetition and redundancy.

The guidelines are being used by state agencies, such as the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, and it is strongly encouraged that all other local, state, and federal agencies and organizations to use the guidelines so that there is continuity statewide. Use of the guidelines will increase opportunities for funding and resources. With the extent of interpretive elements recommended by this plan, including both new and existing signs to be upgraded, it will be important for projects to follow the Design Guidelines.

Content and Organization of the Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are based on Washington’s story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The imagery, regional context, and suggested interpretive topics capture the spirit of exploration that was part of the Lewis and Clark Expedition as it traveled through what is now known as Washington. The guidelines draw upon a mix of recognizable elements, some continuous and some unique.

Continuity can be established throughout the network of interpretive exhibits through visual and thematic cues derived from elements and impressions of such elements as the natural landscape and native cultures present at the time of the Expedition; early 1800s frontier exploration; the Corps of Discovery trading activities; the “Age of Enlightenment,” and travel along the Snake and Columbia rivers. The proposed aesthetic for interpretive structures is directly derived from the distinct natural environments and native cultures encountered by Lewis and Clark in Southeastern Washington, the Columbia River Gorge, and Southwestern Washington.

The link between present day visitors and the Lewis and Clark Expedition will be made through interpretation. The interpretive theme, told through strong interpretive graphics and minimal text, is one key to a successful outdoor exhibit. The exhibit must also fit



within the site's physical and historic context by having a direct relationship to the Lewis and Clark story.

Each site will be part of a larger network of interpretation along the Lewis and Clark Trail. In addition to interpretive exhibits, there will be orientation panels and signage to direct visitors, and other elements constructed to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Elements such as bicentennial monuments and plaques, trail marker and mileposts, highway directional trail identifier signs, and other types of improvements also are addressed in the Design Guidelines. Specific chapters of the guidelines are listed below:

- I. Introduction
- II. How to Create Interpretive Exhibits – The Process
- III. Washington's Lewis and Clark Story – Imagery, Regional Context, and Suggested Interpretive Topics
- IV. Interpretive Guidelines
- V. Outdoor Exhibits, Markers, and Other Elements
- VI. Appendix (Includes Panel Layout Grids, Type Styles, International Symbols, Highway Signing Information, Resource List, Reference Materials, Image Credits, and Potential Funding Opportunities)
- VII. Color Palette

The Process of Developing Outdoor Interpretive Exhibits

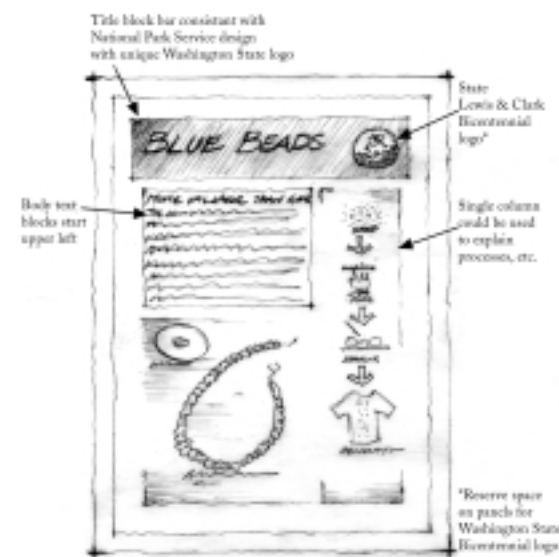
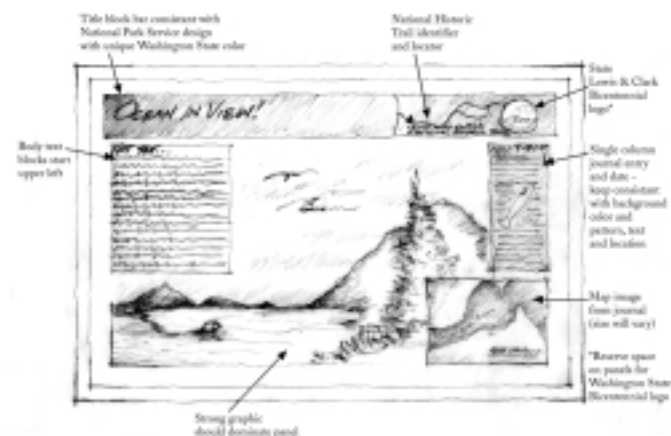
For those unfamiliar with the process of creating outdoor exhibits, or who want to review the steps involved, the Design Guidelines outline four main steps, including:

1) Getting Started

The first step for your team should involve reviewing the Design Guidelines, the *Corridor Action Plan* for commemorating the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial in Washington, and other relevant resource materials, as well as brainstorming on potential ideas and topics for the exhibits.

2) Planning

The next step should include determining goals, themes, the audience, parameters, resources, and the site. Other considerations during planning include the story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition related to the site, the site's context and ownership, and the availability of resources.



3) Design Process

The design process should involve selecting a design team and developing a work plan for utilizing agency and/or committee resources for the project in order to meet schedule requirements and ensure accuracy and consistency. Design outcomes should be finalized written text and graphic layout for interpretive panels and design drawings for interpretive structures and other elements. Some early permitting and environmental reviews may also occur during design.

4) Implementation

This final step should include completing the final review, getting permits and approvals for construction, then fabricating, building, and installing the exhibits on site.

Administering the Design Guidelines

The Agency Assistance Team will provide basic oversight to determine if state projects comply with the intent of the Design Guidelines. For other interpretive projects related to the Lewis and Clark Trail, local agencies and organizations are encouraged to refer to the Design Guidelines so that a cohesive look can be developed statewide and interpretive themes and topics blend well without redundancy.

The Design Guidelines can be an important resource to groups wishing to design and develop their own Lewis and Clark interpretive projects. The Governor's [Washington State] Lewis and Clark Trail Committee is another helpful

resource. The members of the committee have offered to provide reviews of interpretive content and monument wording to ensure historical accuracy.

How to Get a Copy of the Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines are available online at: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/hlrp/hcp/hcp_home.htm. You will be at the Heritage Corridors Program home page, you can click on the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial button which will take you to the design guidelines and other bicentennial information. You can download and print out a "PDF" copy of the guidelines. If you do not have access to the Internet, you can obtain a copy of the guidelines by contacting the Washington State Historical Society Heritage Resource Center 360-586-0219.

